



# News Release

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## **U.S. Labor Department's MSHA Announces Panel Studying Coal Mine Conveyor Belts Will Meet January 9 and 10**

**ARLINGTON, Va.** – The U.S. Department of Labor's Mine Safety and Health Administration (MSHA) announced today that the Technical Study Panel on the utilization of belt air and the composition and fire retardant properties of belt materials in underground coal mining will begin a two-day meeting Jan. 9, 2007, in Washington, D.C. The meeting notice and charter governing the panel will be published in the *Federal Register* on Dec. 22, 2006. The charter governing the panel is available at [www.msha.gov](http://www.msha.gov).

The panel was created by the Mine Improvement and New Emergency Response (MINER) Act of 2006.

"MSHA is committed to fully implementing the MINER Act, and we are taking the lead in forming and administering this panel," said Richard E. Stickler, assistant secretary of labor for mine safety and health.

The panel was created under Section 11 of the MINER Act and will prepare and submit a report regarding the utilization of belt air and the composition and fire retardant properties of belt materials in underground coal mining. During its first meeting, the panel will elect a chairperson and develop a plan to achieve its objectives.

The panel will meet at the Ronald Reagan Building and International Trade Center, Polaris Suite, 1300 Pennsylvania Ave., N.W. The public is invited to attend the meeting starting at 1 p.m. on Jan. 9, 2007.

The members of the panel are:

- Jurgen F. Brune, chief, Disaster Prevention and Response Branch, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health, Pittsburgh Research Laboratory, Pittsburgh, Pa.
- Felipe Calizaya, associate professor, University of Utah, Salt Lake City, Utah.
- Jan M. Mutmanský, professor emeritus of mining engineering, Pennsylvania State University, University Park, Pa.
- Jerry C. Tien, associate professor, Department of Mining Engineering, University of Missouri-Rolla, Rolla, Mo.
- Thomas P. Mucho, Thomas P. Mucho & Associates, Inc., mining consultancy, Washington, Pa.
- James L. Weeks, director, Evergreen Consulting, LLC, Silver Spring, Md.

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